



# Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilot *State of Minnesota*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

## BACKGROUND

EPA Region 5 selected the State of Minnesota for a Regional Brownfields Pilot. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has an effort in place to expand the State's Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program. In 1994, MPCA invited the owners of 54 sites listed in EPA's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) database to participate in the project, to which 32 responded favorably.

Approximately half of the 32 sites are located in the greater metropolitan area surrounding Minneapolis and St. Paul; the remainder are located in more rural areas of the State. The sites were used predominately as coal gasification facilities and municipal landfills, but also comprise wood-treating, electroplating, and manufacturing operations. Future uses of the sites will vary; former landfills located in the greater metropolitan area may become composting facilities, while some coal gasification sites may continue in their previous uses. Construction of a city hall is proposed for one site. Most sites are not currently suited for industrial purposes.

## PILOT SNAPSHOT



*State of Minnesota*

**Date of Award:**  
September 1995

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targeted more than 50 CERCLIS properties for participation in the State's voluntary cleanup program.

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<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of MPCA's brownfields project was twofold. First, the Pilot sought to encourage owners of contaminated sites to engage in voluntary cleanup and avoid official enforcement action. Then, the Pilot, as part of the State's successful Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program, tested the program as a potential vehicle for eliminating sites from the CERCLIS backlog.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Sought participation in Pilot activities from owners of more than 50 CERCLIS properties;
- Identified candidate sites and selected priority sites with redevelopment potential;
- Assessed thirty-two sites;
- Conducted meetings and workshops with municipalities and other property owners to educate, obtain feedback, and resolve problems;
- Provided guidance to site owners relating to assessment, remediation, and development financing programs offered by states and other entities; and
- Encouraged participation in the State's voluntary cleanup program (only two of 32 sites dropped out of the program).

\*Funding for this Pilot was made possible and was supported by combining funds with other Superfund resources.

## LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the State of Minnesota Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- MPCA has engaged in cost recovery actions for the resources expended in review and oversight of the voluntary cleanup programs. MPCA anticipates that the recovered funds will enable it to continue overseeing and reviewing cleanup to completion at all sites.

- Remediation at 13 sites was initiated and/or completed.
- Seven 'No Further Action Letters' were issued by MPCA.
- Three sites are currently under State enforcement action.
- Planned and ongoing oversight of remediation activities at the brownfields sites by MPCA even though funding ended in fiscal year 1996.